

# Department of Human Services

## Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, August 16, 2007

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Prepared by the  
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## Muskegon Chronicle

### Man charged in pool deaths to face trial

Thursday, August 16, 2007

#### FROM LOCAL REPORTS

The man charged with criminally neglecting to supervise two 5-year-old girls who drowned in a swimming pool will face trial on the felony charges.

Chillum Oudsema, 30, of 3214 MacArthur has waived his right to a preliminary examination in Muskegon's 60th District Court. The hearing had been scheduled for this morning. Oudsema was bound over for trial in 14th Circuit Court on two counts of second-degree child abuse, which carries a maximum penalty of four years in prison.

The victims -- Oudsema's daughter, Courtney Oudsema, and her cousin Serenity Meinders -- lived at the same MacArthur Road house as Chillum Oudsema, where the drowning occurred. The girls were found in an unused pool in the back yard and may have been there for hours, authorities said. Muskegon Township police said there was more than 6 feet of murky water in the deep end.

Authorities said Oudsema had been in the basement, watching videos and sleeping at times while in charge of the children.

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Article published Aug 15, 2007  
Daycare provider charged with child abuse  
The Enquirer

A Battle Creek woman, Katrina Roberts, 24, is scheduled to appear for a preliminary examination Tuesday in Calhoun County District Court after being arraigned this week on a third-degree child abuse charge.

Roberts, 24, is charged with slapping an 11-month old boy April 12 at her former daycare center in Bedford Township.

Carrie Jones, the mother of the child, said this week her son remains traumatized and wakes up several times a night and has lost his appetite since the incident.

Roberts faces up to two years in prison if convicted of the misdemeanor. She was released on a \$5,000 personal recognizance bond.

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Fund created for tot's family

Augusta firefighters collect donations for drowned toddler's funeral expenses

Thursday, August 16, 2007

A fund has been established for an Augusta Township family whose toddler drowned in a hot tub on Tuesday night.

The Augusta Township Fire Department, in conjunction with the family of Lauren Nicole Williamson, has set up a memorial fund to assist with funeral expenses.

The 14-month-old was found floating in the hot tub of her family's home at 8100 Willis Road after 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Washtenaw County Sheriff's officials said.

Her mother told deputies she sat the toddler in a living room next to her 14-year-old mentally disabled daughter and went upstairs for about five minutes. When she returned, the mother said, she found the toddler submerged in the hot tub in an adjacent room.

An investigation is continuing.

Donations to the Williamson

family may be sent to the Ypsilanti

Area Federal Credit Union, 424 S. Mansfield Road, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 in care of The Friends of the Augusta Township Fire Department. Donations may

also be dropped off directly to any

area branch of the credit union.

Ochalek-Stark Funeral Home in

Milan is handling the funeral arrangements, with services set for Friday.

News Staff Reporter Art Aisner

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**ourMidland.com**  
from the Midland Daily News

08/15/2007

## Clare coach Luplow suspended

By [Dan Chalk](#)

Kelly Luplow has made his share of tough calls over the last 20 years as the Clare head football coach. But last week, a very tough call went against him.

The Clare Public Schools school board suspended Luplow without pay for the entire fall semester for violating the Child Protection Act and Clare Public Schools policy.

Luplow, also a Clare teacher and a former MDN coach of the year, would not comment specifically on the suspension, but he said it has been a very difficult time.

"It has not been easy," he said this morning in an interview with the Daily News. "It's been difficult on the program as far as what happened and certainly on my family. But we'll get through it."

The Child Protection Act and district policy state that a public school employee must report any knowledge of physical assault or neglect of a student, according to Clare Superintendent Greg McMillan.

McMillan said a female student -- who is a close friend of Luplow's family, according to a newspaper report -- told Luplow in May 2006 that she had been sexually assaulted but also asked him not to tell anyone else. He did not tell anyone, McMillan noted.

The girl's mother recently found out about the assault, and Clare Police investigated, according to the Mount Pleasant Morning Sun.

McMillan noted that a public school employee is mandated to report assault or neglect of any kind.

"It doesn't matter how in depth that child should get (about the incident)," he said. "The employee has to report it. Then it's off (the school employee's) shoulders."

McMillan said it has been a tough time for the whole community because Luplow is such a popular and well-liked figure in the community.

"There are a lot of people that are feeling some pain," he said.

Many people from the community attended the school board meeting on Aug. 7 where the decision was made to suspend Luplow without pay for the entire fall semester, which ends in January.

"They were there not only to support (Luplow), but also the other family involved and the board as well," McMillan said.

Luplow's longtime assistant, Doug Haggart, will coach the team in Luplow's absence.

"The transition for the program should be fine," Luplow said. "We've had a coaching staff that's been together a long time. Doug's an outstanding coach. We all work so well together that I don't think it'll skip a beat whatsoever."

Luplow said there's a good chance he will return to coach Clare next fall.

"That is kind of something that will be decided later," he said. "I'm certainly leaving all the options open. But there's a good chance I will be (returning to coach Clare), yeah."

In the meantime, Luplow has accepted a position as running backs coach for this fall at Alma College under head football coach Jim Cole, whom Luplow has known for a long time.

"I'm excited to be coaching at Alma College. I'm the running backs coach as of this moment," Luplow said.

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Luplow's Clare teams have made the playoffs seven out of the last eight years. All together, under Luplow, the Pioneers have made the playoffs 10 times in 20 years, and have won several Jack Pine Conference titles. He's 135-62 in his career at Clare, including a trip to the state semifinals in 2000.



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**Will Ryan Newman  
make the chase for  
the NEXTEL Cup?**

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## News

### Second annual bike helmet event

*Wednesday, August 15, 2007 10:04 AM EDT*

CASSOPOLIS - The second annual Safe Kids Cass County bicycle helmet event took place July 31 at the Cass County Fairgrounds.

The event was sponsored by Safe Kids Cass County in collaboration with the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

Two trained individuals properly fit each child with an appropriate bicycle helmet.

The 125 helmets were provided to children by Safe Kids of Michigan and the Cass County Sheriff's Office.

Parents and children were given instructions and a demonstration on how to properly wear their helmet.

The children and their parents were given bicycle safety materials and other safety information to take with them.

Materials for the children were provided by Safe Kids Cass County, State Farm Insurance Co., Cass County Sherriff's Office and C. Wimberley GM.

Individuals assisting with the event were: Cori Perkins, Department of Human Services; Suzanne Dorman, Emily Diederich and Amy Wagoner, Van Buren/Cass District Health Department; Kim Purlee, Cass County Sheriff's Office, Leigh Rogner, Cass County Family Court; Miranda Bailey, Cass County Probation Office; and Frances Rose, Tri- County Head Start. Safe Kids Cass County sponsors are C. Wimberley GM, Sheriff Joseph Underwood, Donnie Bouchard, D.O., Creative Vinyl, Pokagon Head Start, Meijer, State Farm Insurance agents Greg Osborn and Lorie Bowers and Edward Lowe Foundation. Safe Kids Cass County will continue to work on preventing accidental injury of Cass County's kids by providing education to parents and holding events that promote and teach safety.

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Speaking for those who are unable to speak for themselves

*Wednesday, August 15, 2007 10:06 AM EDT*

### **Wednesday, Aug. 15, 2007**

One group of volunteers which performs a very needed task is the Cass County CASAs.

Court-Appointed Special Advocates speak for children, some of whom have been abused and neglected by those who should be the ones protecting them.

Cass County CASA is again hosting cookouts as one of the primary fund-raising events this year.

The third annual CASA cookouts will take place this weekend at locations at Birch Lake on Aug. 17, at Magician Lake on Aug. 18 and at Diamond Lake on Aug. 19.

Grill masters will be plying their craft and, new this year, live music will be provided by Gene Halton.

Attendees will have an opportunity to talk to CASA volunteers and board members about the Cass County CASA program and what their donations can do to help.

Cass County CASA was started by Judge Susan Dobrich of Cass Family Court in 1995.

Dobrich realized that children who had been removed from their homes needed a supportive adult in their lives and an advocate in court.

Many children have come to the attention of the Department of Human Services and the court through concerned teachers, school personnel and law enforcement.

There are more than 150 children in Cass County who are in foster care due to abuse and neglect in their own homes.

CASA volunteers spend time visiting with the child or the children in a family, investigating compliance of parents and service providers to determine whether the orders of the Family Court are being followed and report to the court on a regular basis.

A CASA volunteer is the voice of a child in court.

It is the goal of CASA volunteers to assist the court in finding a permanent, safe and secure family for their CASA child whether that is the return of the child to their original family or adoption.

Our volunteers are an amazing force for good, and we need more of them. Our vision is that every child who needs a volunteer will have one. With your help, CASA can reach that goal here in Cass County.

If you are interested in attending one of these cookouts and have not received an invitation, please contact Lisa Schmidt at (269) 445-4431.

You will have an opportunity to hear about this worthy organization and have some fun at the same time.

If you are unable to attend, your donation will still be appreciated.



August 16, 2007

## Creating a Village to Foster a Child

By [PAM BELLUCK](#)

EASTHAMPTON, Mass.

AS a psychotherapist, Wendy Gannett thought she was well equipped to adopt children from the foster care system. “I worked with troubled kids and I saw the horrors,” she said. “I knew firsthand how trying it was.”

But two years ago when she took in a 7-year-old boy named Alex, things quickly got away from her. He had been sexually abused and deprived of food, would turn defiant and even violent, and was so afraid of starving that Ms. Gannett let him sleep with his lunchbox. After a few months his younger sisters, Tanisha and Meraliz, joined them because Ms. Gannett said Alex “wasn’t going to be whole without them.”

Caring for all three made Ms. Gannett feel completely overwhelmed, she said. She quit her job to focus on the children and is living on food stamps and payments from the foster care system. Her friends “freaked out — they couldn’t handle the intensity of the kids,” she said. “I started going to church suppers where I said, I have these three kids. Who will help me?”

Then, last December, Ms. Gannett, 40, moved the family from their home in nearby Northampton, Mass., to an unusual community here called Treehouse. Opened in June of 2006, it was designed to bring together families like hers with each other and with older adults who would act, in the words of its founder, Judy Cockerton, as “honorary grandparents.” Soon, Rosa Young, 63, who had just arrived from Michigan, and Alan Spanier, a 73-year-old former Manhattanite, were babysitting for the children and picking them up from school. And Anna Kirwan, 58, from Sunderland, Mass., was helping out in the morning.

Treehouse is a planned intergenerational community, created in the hope that a close-knit support network can prevent children from bouncing from one foster home to another and give them tools to succeed. So far, there are few such communities. But the concept, pioneered in 1994 by Hope Meadows, at a former military base in Rantoul, Ill., is catching on. Hope Meadows plans to replicate in about 18 states, with the help of \$7.7 million from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, said Ted Chen, a program director for the foundation. Other nonprofit organizations are planning similar projects in California, Connecticut and North Carolina.

“It seems to have the capacity of working a lot better than a caseworker visiting two times a month,” said Tom Berkshire, a former chief of staff for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, who observed Hope Meadows closely. “The issues that foster kids have — this deals with a lot of them. The issue of graduating out of the system at 18, the issue of having role models to follow, the issue of ‘I know where I belong.’ ”

Ms. Cockerton believes the model may also have more widespread effects. “We’re really trying to inspire the nation to think very differently about the 800,000 children in foster care,” she said. It also aims to allow older adults to remain purposeful and avoid the isolation of old age.

Not that Treehouse is a utopia. Early tension with the local school system has not completely dissipated. One child left because things did not work out with a foster family, and not all the older residents have assumed the grandparent role. Still, Harry Spence, who until last May was commissioner of the state's Department of Social Services, said Treehouse, which has a waiting list of 45 older adults and 15 families, is a "crucial experiment" that could also generate ideas about how to help foster children in conventional neighborhoods.

Those ideas could include Treehouse's animal therapy and gardening programs, or its methods of helping parents make decisions, said Sarah Greenblatt, director of the Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, a Treehouse consultant.

Ms. Cockerton, 56, a former teacher and toy shop owner, said the project was inspired by her experience of adopting a child from foster care in 1999. Foster children and adoptive families she met felt stigmatized or "invisible," she said, because people viewed the children as damaged.

Treehouse, a \$15.9 million project, was built on a meadow near Springfield and Holyoke, two cities with large populations of foster children. Ms. Cockerton's nonprofit Treehouse Foundation and the developer, Beacon Communities Development, got help from federal and state tax credits, said Pamela Goodman, president of Beacon Communities. The community's 12 family homes and 48 homes for "elders," as older residents are called — a ratio that Treehouse considered workable — are arranged in clusters, designed to resemble "dollhouses with their entries turned slightly so that every person who leaves their home has the opportunity to engage with someone," Ms. Cockerton said.

The residents — currently 52 elders and 18 parents with 34 children — have diverse motivations for being here. Carmen Hickley, 46, said she came for safety, to escape "the man I married who was starting to mess with one of my children." She has three biological children and four children who adopted after they were removed in 1998 from a home in which one boy was burned, tied up and had two teeth removed with pliers. In their Springfield neighborhood, she said, the children "weren't allowed to ride their bicycles where I couldn't see them, but now they can."

Pam Lumpkin, 35, who has two biological children and a 12-year-old foster daughter, chose Treehouse because in her previous neighborhoods "there weren't any other foster kids. Neighbors were always worried about how they were going to behave and whether they were going to break into their house."

And Mary and Jack D'Amato wanted help raising Selena, 14, and Sarah, 12, sisters who were each previously in 24 different foster homes. "We've had crisis intervention teams in our house, we've been in family therapy," said Ms. D'Amato, who is 48.

"Our hearts just went out to these kids," said Mr. D'Amato, 53. "We couldn't believe that they had been through so much abuse. But we realized we were only two people and we need to work as many."

Since arriving in April, they have encountered "a new set of problems and a new set of joys," said Mr. D'Amato. The girls have made new friendships, he said, "but with that came, how do they behave in those friendships? But the kids are happier with these kinds of challenges."

Some residents may have been attracted by the income-based rents, which range from \$511 (the lowest rent for a one-bedroom) to \$1,015 (the highest rate for a 5-bedroom). Donna Robinson, 60, said she wanted to leave her "mold-infested rat hole" in Huntington, Mass.

But Mr. Spanier, a retired New York photographer who teaches the children photography and kite-flying, said he came to be involved in something positive. Ms. Young was drawn to the idea of “being extended family for foster families.”

Still, living in such a closely intertwined community and merging generations from varied backgrounds is “not an easy thing to do,” said Gary Anderson, dean of [Michigan State University](#)’s school of social work.

Indeed, Treehouse has had its share of disappointments in its first year. To gain support of Easthampton residents and ease the impact on local schools of children likely to need extra help, Treehouse financed several school programs, including after-school activities and a writer-in-residence. But just as the community was opening, Treehouse announced that money had run out.

“We discovered their word didn’t mean what we thought it did,” said Deborah N. Carter, the Easthampton schools superintendent. “It jaundices your view a little bit.”

Ms. Cockerton said she felt “such shame” about the situation.

In January, Edgar L. Selavka, a foster parent and preschool teacher, was arrested on charges of possessing child pornography. There was no evidence that children at Treehouse were involved, but Mr. Selavka and his wife, with a 7-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old foster daughter, were asked to leave, and residents were shaken.

Several residents said Treehouse’s straightforward handling of the incident bolstered the community. Still, Robin Weingarten, Treehouse’s child and family program coordinator, said some residents may “feel set back in their ability to trust.”

One child’s departure in June underscored the fragility of foster family relationships, even with community support.

And not all elders have volunteered to help children or been successful in developing relationships with them. While Hope Meadows, the Illinois community, requires its older residents to volunteer at least six hours a week (and requires that one parent stay home with the children, paying them a salary to do so), Treehouse rejected the idea of similar requirements, said Kerry Homstead, the community facilitator, because “I don’t think most people are attracted to something because they have to do it.”

“We have some folks who jump right in,” Ms. Cockerton said. “We have a group of people who dip in and out. Then we have other people who are still standing behind their curtains and peeking out because they’re not sure how to behave.” Elizabeth Poudrier, 73, said, “When I first got here, I shied away. Then it dawned on me that we were all in the same boat, and I came out of that shell.”

Elders get training in using restraint when hugging or touching abused children, and in “how not to take children’s behavior personally,” Ms. Homstead said. “Nobody is being matched or encouraged to hook up with children until we have some sense of readiness.”

Bringing together children with traumatic backgrounds has advantages. Nathan Flannery, 13, one of four adopted siblings, is not alone in finding it easy to get along with some children, “because they’ve been through some of the same things.” But it can also create combustible combinations. “There are certain kids you don’t want to spend too much time together,” said Carolyn Burns, the executive director of Berkshire Children and Families, the social service agency here. “And people always have to be vigilant because something can trigger some reaction.”

Recently Sarah, one of the D'Amatos' foster daughters, kicked Ms. Lumpkin's 12-year-old son, Kenny, at the community center. She stormed off, and someone called Ms. D'Amato, who tried, with other mothers, to persuade Sarah to apologize.

"Even if somebody makes you mad, you can't kick or hit them," Ms. Lumpkin said.

"It was an accident," Sarah said.

"No, it wasn't," Ms. Lumpkin said.

Ms. Hickley added: "You want to have a lot of friends, you got to have a good attitude."

Despite such episodes, Ms. D'Amato said, Sarah is "healing in little ways," spending more time on activities like drawing pictures.

"I like it here," Sarah said. "We have a community." Meaningful connections have clearly been made.

Ms. Kirwan teaches writing workshops, where both Selena and Ms. D'Amato, have written cathartic stories about violence and abuse. The D'Amato girls serve elders breakfast at a Saturday cafe here, and call Ms. Poudrier "Nana." Ms. Young and Mr. Spanier calm Ms. Gannett's children with singing and conversation.

Ryan Flannery, 9, Nathan's brother, withdrew after moving here, said his mother, Christine, 43. The Flannerys, who have two biological children (a third died as a toddler), moved to Treehouse because they wanted their children "to have more connections," Ms. Flannery said. But it turned out that there were more preteens and teens than children Ryan's age. And some of the programs they were expecting were not yet in place.

"It just seemed like nothing worked," said Ms. Flannery, who began home-schooling Ryan.

But Ryan liked visiting Ms. Kirwan's tchotchke-filled home and letting her cats climb on him. And Ms. Robinson invited him to garden, paint birdhouses and read to her dog. (Ryan has a little trouble reading, Ms. Robinson explained, "and dogs are nonjudgmental.")

For her part, Ms. Robinson said, "Ryan brings out the kid in me. I'm over there with a butterfly net, hobbling around with a cane."

"This is a different world," she said. "There's life here."

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# The Daily Telegram

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**THURSDAY AUGUST 16, 2007** Last modified: *Friday, August 10, 2007 9:13 PM EDT*

## Trial ordered in ATS sex abuse suit

— A Lenawee County judge rejected a motion to dismiss a lawsuit against the Adrian Training School.

By [Dennis Pelham](#)

Daily Telegram Staff Writer

**ADRIAN** — A motion to throw out a teenage girl's lawsuit over sexual abuse she suffered at Adrian Training School was rejected this week by a Lenawee County Circuit judge assigned to hear the case in the Michigan Court of Claims.

Attorneys for the girl claim her constitutional and civil rights were violated because Adrian Training School and a supervisor at the facility failed to prevent and stop the sexual abuse in 2003 when she was a resident. Staff member Joe Eddie Tindall of Adrian was convicted of second-degree criminal sexual conduct in the case. He was sentenced in 2004 to a three- to 15-year prison term.

A judgment was granted in February finding Tindall liable in a portion of the lawsuit handled in circuit court by Judge Timothy P. Pickard. No amount of damages has yet been assessed against Tindall.

A claim against Tindall's supervisor, Donald Howard, is still pending in circuit court. And a claim against Adrian Training School that Pickard dismissed in January was returned to him in March by assignment from the state Court of Claims, which handles lawsuits seeking monetary damages from the state government.

Assistant attorney general Denise Barton argued Monday there is no basis for the claims that Adrian Training School and Howard violated the girl's constitutional rights.

"A state's failure to protect an individual from danger, such as alleged here, does not constitute a violation of either the federal or state due process clause," she stated in a motion to dismiss.

Barton argued the case is similar to one in which a female prison guard was barred from suing the state over being kidnapped and raped by an inmate. In that case, the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled: "However derelict in their duties the prison officials may have been here, it cannot be said that they deliberately decided to have plaintiff taken captive and raped."

Barton also argued the girl had no civil rights protections when she was placed as a resident of Adrian Training School.

"Civil rights laws do not apply to individuals who are subject to supervision by a state or county correctional facility," she stated in a written brief.

She further argued that former staff supervisor Howard is covered by governmental immunity unless there is evidence of gross negligence in his supervision of Tindall.

"The plaintiff cannot establish with any certainty that 'but for' defendant Howard's failure to train Tindall on

protection and care of female detainees or defendant Howard's failure to supervise Tindall she would not have been injured by Tindall," Barton stated.

Pickard agreed with attorney Scott Rooney of Dearborn that there is enough evidence against both Adrian Training School and Howard to justify continuing the lawsuit. He scheduled the case for trial on April 29 next year.

This case involves sexual abuse of minor children placed in the care and protection of the state government facility, Rooney stated.

An amended complaint he filed in May charges Adrian Training School failed to prevent and remedy the sexual abuse, sexual harassment and acts of retaliation against the victim. Rooney argued that failure amounts to cruel and unusual punishment as well as due process violations.

Rooney also claims Adrian Training School violated the victim's civil rights by allowing adult males to have "unsupervised control over minor female prisoners" who suffer from psychological and emotional disabilities.

A criminal prosecution of Tindall, 33, was started in 2004 after Michigan State Police completed an investigation of sex abuse complaints begun in the fall of 2003. Tindall was charged with having sex with six teenage girls he supervised between April and September 2003. He pleaded guilty to a single count of criminal sexual conduct.

Tindall filed a defense to the civil lawsuit, disputing the sexual abuse claims. Pickard ruled in February he cannot deny claims he confessed to in the criminal case and found him liable for damages.

-- CLOSE WINDOW--



## Teen could face adult penalties if convicted

Thursday, August 16, 2007

By John Tunison

The Grand Rapids Press

WEST OLIVE -- An Ottawa County sheriff's deputy once described 13-year-old Fathi Cullen in a way that stuck with the boy's adoptive parents.

"It's as if he has two personalities, a good kid and a monster," they recalled the deputy saying.

It's that dichotomy of character that prosecutors and juvenile court caseworkers now struggle with as they decide how to deal with Cullen, a diminutive and often reserved boy with a history of sex assaults that began nearly two years ago.

Prosecutors now have the option of seeking adult criminal penalties for Cullen, if he's convicted of recent allegations. A judge Wednesday ordered him to stand trial on multiple felony charges, including three counts of sexual assault against an 18-year-old woman he allegedly attacked in June.

The judge also ruled him competent to stand trial after hearing a psychologist say Cullen was highly prone to impulsive actions that might be caused by a chemical imbalance in his brain, but said he did not suffer from psychosis.

The assault victim, now 19, gave a tearful description of the June 2 attack during a five-hour hearing Wednesday, often weeping as she recalled how Cullen walked into her River Haven Village home in Grand Haven Township and began grabbing at her.

The victim remembered yelling at Cullen, "What are you doing? Get out of my house!" before he lunged toward her, put his arms around her and started rubbing her beneath her clothes.

"I was pushing him away and screaming at him," she said.

She testified Cullen soon after pushed her to the floor, managed to rip off her shirt and grabbed at her breasts. He started choking her with his hands, then tried to pull her pants down, but she shoved him off and pulled them back up as she ran to call 911.

"At that point, I really thought I was going to get hurt. I was scared and alone and nobody heard me scream," she testified. "I thought he was going to rape me."

Cullen fled the home and later was captured after two younger females, ages 12 and 14, reported that he tried to grope them at nearby Hofma Park.

Under questioning from Cullen's attorney, Leonard Mungo, the victim admitted the boy seemed confused in the moments before he fled her home, sitting on the floor as if he didn't know what to do. Mungo suggested Cullen did not understand what he was doing.

Prosecutors believe Cullen -- who in April 2006 groped a woman at the Georgetown Township Meijer store and later accessed sexual Web sites on school computers and touched a school staff member inappropriately -- is a danger to the community.

Ottawa County Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Kuiper said the court's goal is to balance Cullen's need for treatment and rehabilitation against his danger to residents.

If Cullen is convicted, a judge will decide whether to sentence him as a juvenile, adult or give a blended juvenile-adult punishment.

Cullen's parents, who adopted him at age 4 from a background of abuse and neglect, say they know their son has problems and admit he attacked the 18-year-old.

"Our sympathy goes out to her, and we're not saying he didn't do anything wrong," said his father, Antonio Cullen.

But the Cullens say their son needs to be punished as a juvenile and be sent to a residential treatment center to get the help he needs, including drug treatment and counseling.

"I think the adult system would probably eat him alive," he said.

Antonio Cullen said his son is on a high dose of Ritallin, an attention deficit disorder drug, but did not have the medication the day he left the family's house, also in the River Haven Village mobile home park. His son left through a window without permission.

"He is better on the medication, but still things happen even when he is on it," Antonio Cullen said.

He's not sure why his son began committing sexually deviant acts in late 2005, but speculated that puberty coupled with his emotional disorder fueled the trouble.

Mungo, Fathi Cullen's attorney, plans to prove the 13-year-old is not criminally responsible because of the possible chemical imbalance and "extreme impulsivity."

"They want to try him as an adult for something he doesn't understand he did or why he did it," Mungo said.

**Send e-mail to the author: [jtunison@grpress.com](mailto:jtunison@grpress.com)**

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# Boy, 13, to be tried as adult

Thu, Aug 16, 2007

BY CHRIS EPPLETT

[cepplett@grandhaventribune.com](mailto:cepplett@grandhaventribune.com)

The way has been cleared for the jury trial of a boy charged with several sexual assaults in June in Grand Haven Township.



An Ottawa County Family Court judge concurred Wednesday with a doctor's assessment that 13-year-old Fathi Cullen is competent to stand trial, and charged the boy on five counts.

Cullen faces a possible adult sentence in charges stemming from an alleged sexual assault on June 2 in River Haven Village, where he lived at the time of the incident.

According to the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department, Cullen entered an 18-year-old woman's residence on Crooked Tree Lane at the mobile home park on June 2 and sexually assaulted her. During the five-hour search for Cullen that afternoon, police said he also attempted to sexually assault two other girls, ages 12 and 14, in Hofma Park, west of Forest Park Drive.

Ottawa County Family Court Judge Jon Hulsing charged the boy with attempted first-degree criminal sexual conduct, two counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct, first-degree home invasion and interfering with electronic communications.

Cullen also faces two subsequent charges in connection to the second incident on June 2.

Tears streaming down her face, the alleged victim testified in court Wednesday during Cullen's pretrial hearing. She said the boy forced entry into her home, groped her and attempted to rape her.

"He went toward me like he knew what he was doing," the woman said. "I was asking him what he was doing (in my house). He wasn't listening to me, so I started yelling. I thought he was going to rape me."

Members of the young woman's family, who appeared in her support, were also full of tears.

"It was pretty hard (to sit in the courtroom)," her mother said. "If he had a history, why didn't he get help? Now (the defense and Cullen's family) want to get help because of what happened to my kid."

During a press conference Monday, Antonio and Saundra Cullen, who adopted Fathi 11 years ago, said their son should not be designated as an adult and needs special help.

Ottawa County Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Kuiper previously petitioned adult designation in the case. However, a designation hearing became unnecessary Wednesday because the adult designation was automatically applied when Cullen was bound over on the attempted first-degree criminal sexual conduct charge.

According to state law, attempted first-degree criminal sexual conduct falls under a "specified juvenile violation," which constitutes adult designation.

With this designation, Cullen would be "tried in the same manner as an adult," affording him all the legal and procedural protections of an adult, according to state law. It also gives the judge the option to sentence the young teen as an adult. The judge still has the option to sentence Cullen as a juvenile or impose a delayed sentence.

Although the Cullens said they were disappointed with Wednesday's decision, they were sympathetic toward the alleged victim.

"Our sympathy goes out to the victim," Antonio Cullen said. "Our aim here is to get this child help. I think the adult system will eat him alive."

While Kuiper understands the Cullens' concerns, she says protecting the community is the prosecution's first priority.

Cullen remains lodged in the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center with a cash bond set at \$100,000.

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## Eight-Year-Old Boy Crashes Stolen Vehicle

August 15, 2007

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BARRY COUNTY — An eight-year-old Barry County boy continues to recover this morning after police say he stole a neighbors car and crashed it into an embankment.

Officers say 8-year-old Trai Rohm ran to his next door neighbors home Tuesday afternoon, stole the keys to their SUV and took it for a ride. He managed to make it more than a mile before driving off the road and into an embankment more than 8 feet deep.

Neighbors watched the whole thing happen.

"I just looked out and he was going along the embankment thinking, oh, that person is driving crazy, didn't think much of it," said Cathy Ryan

The boy suffered most seriously from a broken leg.

State troopers are pushing for charges to be filed against the eight-year-old in juvenile court.

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Article published Aug 16, 2007  
Center provides crisis child care  
Trace Christenson  
The Enquirer

Three or four times a week, parents need help from the Take-A-Break Child Care Center in Battle Creek.

“If you just have had it with kids and can’t tolerate it anymore, we are usually able to help with them,” said Nancy French, co-executive director of the center at 1321 W. Michigan Ave. “We have respite care if you just need to get away.”

The center is the only one of its kind in Calhoun County which can take children when an immediate crisis occurs for their parents or care providers, according to French and Marylou Bax, program director for the child care center.

The two women explained their service after two children died in recent weeks in Battle Creek and Marshall while in the care of their mothers’ boyfriends. And while it’s not yet clear if the deaths were the result of a violent outburst by the caregiver, long-term abuse or some other cause, Bax said Take-A-Break is available for adults who need time away from their children.

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Published August 12, 2007

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## Area experts issue advice on violence, grief

By WILL WHELTON  
Editor

WILLIAMSTON — Julie Mishoe's death, robbing one local family of a daughter and mother, put a spotlight on domestic violence in mid-Michigan.

Mishoe was killed by her ex-boyfriend, Ronald Dailey, who was also the father of her three young daughters. The family of Mishoe must now help the children deal with the loss of both of their parents.

### Dealing with domestic violence

Williamston Police Chief Mark Hetfield encouraged those in a potentially dangerous relationship to contact their local police department.

"Once something starts — whether it's boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, or a live-in relationship — and it starts to turn violent, don't let it escalate," he said. "If you have any questions at all, come see us. We'd be happy to steer anyone in the right direction. There are a lot of support groups, and there are laws in place that we can use to assist in getting someone out of the situation."

Eve's House (End Violent Encounters) provides shelter and supportive services for victims of domestic violence.

Nancy Bates, community development director for Eve's House, said domestic violence is a power and control issue; even though the relationship may not be physically violent, one partner may be controlling. She said the shelter offers a variety of assistance for those feeling threatened in their relationship, including safety and escape plans, housing and counseling.

"Call us: Everything is confidential and everything is free, so people don't have to worry about anything," she said. "People should never feel they're alone. The abuse may be physical, emotional, verbal - if you have any sense of fear, call us. Even if it's not physical, if you fear for yourself or your children, just call us."

In addition, the Personal Protection Order Office is staffed and financed through Eve's House.

Even if a relationship has not gotten to the point of being abusive, Bates said Eve's House offers a non-residential program for those looking for advice.

"They don't have to come into the shelter to get our services," she said. "We have counseling for women, for children, for families, and it's all free. We do everything we can to help the situation. If you feel threatened, but you haven't gotten to the point you don't quite know what to do, you can

still come in and talk to us. Maybe we can figure out ways to help you deal with the situation or make the situation better and avoid getting to the point where there's no out."

In addition to assisting those in domestic abuse situations, Eve's House instructs police in dealing with domestic violence and visits area schools to teach about dating violence.

"We go into the schools, junior highs and high schools, and talk to the young people about dating relationships and dating violence," said Bates. "We try to show them what is right and what is wrong in a relationship so that maybe it never gets to the point where you have something tragic."

Bates said whenever Eve's House personnel receive a call on their hotline number — (517) 372-5572 — they make sure the person is safe.

"The first thing we say when someone calls our emergency line is, 'Are you safe? Can you talk? Where are you?' explained Bates. "Sometimes they're hiding in a closet, so we keep them talking and we will call the police for them because sometimes people are scared to call the police."

### **Helping children cope with loss**

"This is a very tragic situation," said Ingham County Undersheriff Allan Spyke, at a press conference following the murder/suicide. "Three children are left behind without their mother."

Ele's Place is an organization designed to offer support for grieving children and their families, using peer support group programs.

Kelly Ahti, a program coordinator and licensed social worker at Ele's Place, said news of the tragedy may impact other children in the community as well.

"In terms of children, both for the schools and the adults of the children in the community, expect that they might have questions and anxieties," said Ahti. "'Could this happen to my family?' Expect that, and give them age-appropriate information. They don't necessarily need to know all of the details, but they're going to know something is going on so give them age-appropriate information."

Ahti said family members and teachers should be aware of signs a child may have trouble understanding the crime. Some signs: Difficulty focusing, nightmares, difficulty falling asleep or an increase in worrying. If children are experiencing prolonged signs of anxiety, Ahti encouraged families to seek professional advice.

"If it's really disrupting their functioning, they might seek some additional help," said Ahti, "maybe talking to a school counselor or a mental health professional."

Ahti said the news coverage of the tragedy could stir up memories of a death or personal trauma in a child's own family, too. Reassuring children that they are safe is key, she said.

"In terms of their fear and anxiety of their own family's safety, reassure them this is very rare and keep a routine - all the things that help kids feel secure," she said. "Tell them what you do to keep them safe, such as locking the doors at night, maybe give them a night-light, maybe allow them to call home from school or daycare for a period of time if that's what they need to keep their anxieties in check. A little extra nurturing can help them feel secure."

For more information on Eve's House, call (517) 372-5976 or visit [www.eveinc.org](http://www.eveinc.org). For more information on Ele's Place, call (517) 482-1315 or visit [www.elesplace.org](http://www.elesplace.org).

Contact Will Whelton at [wwhelton@gannett.com](mailto:wwhelton@gannett.com) or (517) 627-6085 ext. 39.



## Seniors learn how to avoid becoming victims of crime

### Law enforcement officials speak

By Gordon Wilczynski  
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

Criminals often target senior citizens. On Wednesday it was law enforcement experts who set their sights on some of society's most vulnerable citizens, offering advice to the elderly on ways to guard against crime.

About 180 individuals heard from Macomb County Sheriff Mark Hackel, Prosecutor Eric Smith, Assistant Prosecutor John Latella and experts from the U.S. Post Office and county senior citizen organizations on what they should do to protect themselves from people who daily prey on seniors.

They attended a Senior Safety Conference sponsored by the county's Department of Senior Citizen Services at the Warren Community Center.

Kathryn Kozlinski of Macomb Adult Day Services discussed seniors who have Alzheimer's and how friends cope with the situation. She said wandering by seniors is a serious problem, and wondering where they are is stressful as well.

"The program is excellent because it reinforces what we already know and even forgot," said Rose Marie Ciccone of Clinton Township. "Sheriff Hackel told us to work together."

Hackel said his department is partnering with seniors because law enforcement needs their help to control crime.

"The public are the heroes," said Hackel. "They bring our attention to crime and often provide us with a lot of helpful information."

Eastpointe police Inspector John Calabrese and Roseville Community Policing officer Sue Payne and officers from Shelby Township and the sheriff's office answered questions.

Officers and county personnel passed out literature to seniors and told them to be aware of their surroundings. Seniors also were told to help themselves by being alert and believing the old adage that you get nothing for nothing.

Warren Fire Inspector Mike Siloac, who works in the fire prevention section, distributed a lot of information and spoke with the seniors on keeping their homes safe from fires.

Angela Willis, director of the Macomb County Department of Senior Citizen Services, said the conference was a whopping success. She said the seniors were attentive and seemed to grasp all of the information given to them. She hopes every senior citizen who attended the conference will tell someone else what they learned.

A continental breakfast was given to the seniors and they had lunch as well. Willis said Senior Citizen Services is considering two conferences next year because of the excellent turnout. Erna Dziewit and Leroy Sikorski, both of Warren, said they enjoyed the conference and will return next year. Both said the speakers offered ways for seniors to protect themselves.



"You are never too old to learn," said Sikorski.

Ethel Beasley of Warren said she didn't learn anything new, but was glad to hear the advice again. Beasley said her house was broken into but there was nothing she could do about it.

"It's like a refresher course," said Edith Salyers, also of Warren, who had her purse snatched several years ago.

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## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### Back-to-school charity program needs supplies

Thursday, August 16, 2007

By Tom Haroldson

tharoldson@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8545

Its founder may be gone, but the Backpacks for Kids program continues on.

Coordinator Ann Yurcek, who gained national fame for the local program that provides backpacks and school supplies for needy children, has moved to Wisconsin.

Robin Brown, current program coordinator, said there is a great need this year for backpacks and supplies.

"We need at least 150 backpacks," Brown said. "We could use all the help people can give."

The program is aimed at foster children and children from Kalamazoo's three shelters. It provides 300 to 600 backpacks a year and school supplies such as pencils, pens and crayons.

With school beginning Sept. 4, time is of the essence for people to help out.

Backpacks and supplies can be dropped off at Teachers Center, 6506 Constitution Blvd., Portage; Office Depot, 4425 S. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo; D&W, 525 Romence Road, Portage; Ideal Images, 5462 Gull Road, Kalamazoo; Comstock Discount, 6018 E. Michigan Ave., Comstock; and One-Stop Shop Dollar Store, 5015 E. Michigan Ave., Comstock.

Backpacks for Kids is a project that has won national attention for its kids-helping-kids and families-helping-families philosophy.

The project won the Disney All Star Award in 2004 and was highlighted in People magazine for Kids Making a Difference in the November 2005 issue.

In its first four years, Backpacks for Kids helped more than 3,000 children go to school with new backpacks and supplies.

For more information, call Robin Brown at 377-2336.

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Ann Arbor News Letters

August 16, 2007

## **Nation's policies ignore those most in need**

Recently, several clergy colleagues and I, plus our congregants, were invited to donate in support of a local struggling social service agency. Some of us responded quickly to the urgency of the call.

A friend who knows of our donations commented on the bitter irony that our American empire saps billions of dollars out of our economy, wrecking the well-being of families scattered across a very tattered social survival net.

The empire invests those billions in an endless war that destroys thousands of lives, enrages much of the world against us and reaps obscene rewards for enormously profitable industries. These same industries and their leaders seem unwilling to give back much at all for the securing of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for those on the margins of life.

Meanwhile, a "faith-based initiative" is reduced to simply expecting middle-class religious leaders and their congregants to donate \$50 or \$100 toward the needs of those who regularly go without, whose numbers are increasing rapidly.

The family values which seem to me to be important here are those of the entire human family, lovingly cared about by a sovereign god who calls upon this empire and those who live within it to "do justice and love kindness" (Micah 6:8) While my donation is made with a cheerful heart for the individuals in the designated agency, it is also made in anger and protest at the injustice, brutality, greed and arrogance at the heart of the empire's failed policies.

Roland L. Schaedig, Ypsilanti

**August 16, 2007****EDITORIAL**

## **The Less-Than-Generous State**

You would think that we were living in the lap of the Nanny State. One of the most puzzling facts of the political debate is how much traction Republicans still get from their calls to cut taxes and public spending, and how timorous Democrats are in arguing against them.

The United States has long had one of the most meager tax takes in the industrial world. America's social spending — on programs ranging from Medicare and Social Security to food stamps — is almost the stingiest among industrial nations. Among the 30 industrialized countries grouped in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, only four — Turkey, Mexico, South Korea and Ireland — spend less on social programs as a share of their economy.

Long a moral outrage, this tightfisted approach to public needs is becoming an economic handicap. Shortchanging public health impairs America's competitiveness. If the United States is to reap the rewards of globalization, the government must provide a much more robust safety net — to ensure public support for an open economy and protect vulnerable workers.

The O.E.C.D.'s definition of social spending includes programs to help people overcome such challenges as old age, poverty and unemployment. It excludes most education and the tax deduction for mortgage interest, which in the United States benefits the well-to-do more than others.

The United States has long preferred financing some social goals with tax breaks, such as the deduction for company-provided health insurance or credits for dependent care. After adding in these breaks America still comes out sixth from the bottom in total social spending.

Abdicating responsibilities doesn't make them go away, it just pushes them onto the individual or the private sector, which often can't cope with the burden. That's most evident in companies' withdrawal of health benefits. In this country, according to an O.E.C.D. study, unemployment benefits replace, on average, 14 percent of workers' lost earnings. Of the 20 richest countries in the organization, only Japan's are lower.

For American workers, and voters, to accept the increased competition brought on by globalization, the public sector would have to provide much better social insurance than that.

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## Services resource forum set for Thursday

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

**FLINT**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Wednesday, August 15, 2007

**By Ron Fonger**

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FLINT - The Southside Ministers Fellowship and state Department of Human Services will present a community resource forum Thursday.

The event is 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at Mt. Olive Baptist Church's Family Life Center, 424 Kennelworth Ave.

The forum will offer information about community resources, DHS services, and help recruit volunteers, according to a news release.

For more information, contact Kimberlee LeFear at Genesee County's DHS office at 810-760-2504.

- Ron Fonger

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